

UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL
2 October 1982

SOVIET DEFECTOR SEES LITTLE CHANGE WHEN BREZHNEV DEPARTS
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A high-ranking Soviet defector said Saturday Soviet policy will not change significantly after the departure of aging President Leonid Brezhnev because it is formed, not by one man, but by the Politburo and Central Committee.

"I doubt that there will be a substantial change in Soviet policy in the post-Brezhnev period," said Arkady Shevchenko, making a rare public appearance at a convention of some 500 former U.S. intelligence officers.

Shevchenko, the top Soviet official in the U.N. Secretariat with the rank of ambassador, renounced his Soviet citizenship and applied for asylum in the United States in April 1978, citing "serious differences of political philosophy and conviction with the present Soviet regime."

Shevchenko, 51, graying but looking tanned and fit, now lives as an American citizen at a secret location and still cooperates with the CIA.

Soviet policy, Shevchenko said, "is not the policy of one man but the Politburo and the Central Committee. There will be no change. Whoever occupies the post will be from the people who now shape the policy."

"As for the role of the military in shaping future policy, in my view, the influence of the military on foreign policy is exaggerated in the West. Policy in the army is under the Politburo," he said.

Asked why he defected Shevchenko said, "I do not like to repeat too much what led me, after many years of being loyal, promoted to become a member of the Soviet elite." But he said he was disillusioned by the Politburo.

"I saw how they neglected the interests of the people and the country," he said. "I found it contrary to the interest of my conscience. I felt it was for me not to remain in the Soviet Union. I was forced to defend a system in which I did not believe. The only way was to leave the Soviet Union to spend the rest of my life writing and speaking like I am, speaking with you."

Before serving at the United Nations, he was an assistant to Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko and was involved in the negotiations leading to the 1972 Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty. He also had worked in Brezhnev's office before Brezhnev took over the Soviet leadership.

Most of the 300 Soviets working at the U.N. Secretariat before he defected were KGB officers over whom he, as a diplomat, had no control, Shevchenko said.

In his keynote speech to the Association of Former Intelligence officers, Shevchenko also said the United States' "open society" leaves it extremely vulnerable to Soviet espionage ranging from technological and military secrets to broader economic and political matters.

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